

Spanish-American Villages of the Pecos River Valley,
General View
San Miguel County
New Mexico

HABS No. NM-131

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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The Spanish-American towns of the Pecos River Valley were established on the San Miguel del Vado Grant of 1794. Originally planned around defensible plazas, with semi-presidio status, the Colonial towns were created to serve as a buffer against the hostile incursions of the Comanche and Kiowa Indians. In 1821, William Becknell's wagon train crossed the Pecos River at San Miguel del Vado (St. Michael of the Ford) on its journey to Santa Fe from Kansas, Missouri. The route he established for those who followed, was the Santa Fe Trail. The great influx of American traders into New Mexico resulted in relative prosperity for the villages along the Pecos River. In 1841, the Texas-Santa Fe Expedition was captured at La Cuesta (Villanueva) by the forces of Governor Manuel Armijo of the Republic of Mexico. In the Mexican-American War of 1846, the Americans annexed the New Mexico territory to the United States. General Kearny stopped in the Pecos River Valley towns and proclaimed the American occupation of New Mexico while in pursuit of the 22nd Regiment of the Mexican army.

With the advent of the railroad to New Mexico in 1879, the towns which had been bypassed began to decline in importance. Deterioration and abandonment increased rapidly in the Depression era. Presently, the Spanish-American towns consist of dirt streets and adobe buildings with added post-Civil War and Twentieth-Century forms.

The Colonial architecture of the rural towns represents a fusion of native Indian forms, imported Spanish elements, and

later American influences. The basic structure consists of one-story adobe walls supporting a flat adobe-covered roof on vigas (floor or ceiling beams). This form continued until the post Civil War period when the American economy began to have a significant effect upon the architecture of New Mexico. The new expression, classified as the "Territorial Style," is closely related to the American Greek Revival movement of the 1820's.

The most apparent characteristic of the style is the pedimented lintel. The lintel features either a plain fascia or decorative moldings. Another easily recognizable form is the portal or porch. Usually extending across the front of a structure, the portal had smooth-sawn columns with beaded edges.

The Later American period in architecture is marked by the pitched metal roof form; transported to New Mexico by rail and erected over the original flat adobe roofs. Due to the relative isolation of the communities of the Pecos River Valley, the American influences on the architecture is minimal.

Spanish-American Villages of the Pecos River Valley

San Jose
San Miguel
Villanueva
El Cerrito

Nelson Arroyo-Ortiz
HABS
Pecos, New Mexico
September, 1975

(iii)

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I Introduction

During the past seven hundred years, there have been four distinct periods of architectural development in New Mexico: Pueblo Indian, Spanish-Colonial, Territorial, and 20th Century Later-American architecture.

A. Pueblo-Indian Architecture

Indian architecture is, basically, "...a structure of earthen walls supporting a flat wooden roof,...a tradition extending back for more than a thousand years". (Bunting, p. 1.) The Indians used adobe as a building material for their houses and buildings. Adobe is clay soil mixed with straw or manure and kneaded into a mortar of even consistency. The straw or manure acted as a binder and prevented the adobe from cracking during drying. A typical wall was built by placing the adobe layer upon layer; allowing each level to dry before applying the next one. Although adobe wears slowly,¹ there is the need to re-coat the exterior surface at least once a year; usually during the dry season. This was especially true for the roof surface which was most prone to deterioration as a result of direct rain and snowfall. The roof consisted of wooden logs which spanned the room and rested on the walls. Smaller branches and leaves were laid directly over this, and the entire surface was covered by a layer of adobe. Rooms were small; having been limited by the length and size of trees which the Indians could cut with their primitive tools. Entrance into the adobe structures was by means of an opening in the roof. This defense-minded design required ladders, which in case of an attack, could be pulled up; thus denying the intruders a means of reaching the upper levels and the inside. Continuous recoating of the roof surface with

adobe put a strain on the wooden logs and, eventually, resulted in the collapse of the roof. Traditional building methods continued to be employed by the Indians. With the arrival of the Spanish in New Mexico, Indian architecture fused with Spanish forms and created a style of architecture known as Spanish-Colonial architecture.

B. Spanish-Colonial Architecture

The Spanish-Colonial architecture of New Mexico represents a fusion of native Indian and imported Spanish forms. Because of the destruction caused by the Indians during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680-1692, only a few fragments remain from the seventeenth-century. All examples of colonial architecture post-date 1692; the year DeVargas reconquered Santa Fe. (Bunting)

The Spanish adopted the Indian structure although they introduced the technique of forming adobe into bricks. Originally brought to Spain by the Moors, adobe bricks accelerated and facilitated construction. The bricks, which measured up to 56cmX30cmX10cm, were laid on a rough stone foundation. (Boyd)

The use of stone foundations prevented the bottom edge of a wall from eroding and, eventually, toppling over, due to the capillary action of ground water up into the adobe. The wall thickness, in contrast to the thin walls the Indians built, measured anywhere from eighteen inches to twenty-four inches. (Bunting, Boyd). The entire surface was covered with a smooth adobe layer. Common to the Indian and Spanish buildings was batter; an inward inclination of the outside surface of the walls. (Bunting)

Colonial houses had small windows and doors against bad weather and for defense. Windows often had vertical rods and closed

with wooden shutters. Sometimes, sheets of translucent stone or selenite were placed over the window openings. (Bunting) Iron rejas or grilles, commonly associated with Mexican and Spanish architecture, were not used in New Mexico because of the scarcity of iron. Colonial doors were both shorter and narrower than the ones used today. The doors had a raised sill or threshold, of about thirty centimeters, which kept water from running underneath. For lack of bolts, nails, or metal fittings, doors were set in stone sills and lintels.

The typical Spanish-Colonial house consisted of two or three rooms ranging from six to nine meters in length by four and one-half to five and one-half meters in width. The houses were built in long adjoining rows. The single axis house was easily added to; resulting, sometimes, in seven or eight-room-long structures.

The room's width was determined by the size of available vigas or roof beams. The timbers spanned the interior space and rested on rough beams or "...bed molding laid on the adobe bricks in order to level the ceiling". (Boyd, P.7.) The vigas were generally made of spruce or pine and were unshaped after the removal of the bark. Sometimes, the vigas were shaped but this was usually reserved for the important rooms. The beams were covered with rajas or split lengths of wood. Small peeled poles of juniper or aspen were sometimes substituted for the rajas and laid in a diagonal or herring-bone pattern. The pieces were called savinos or latias. A layer of earth, grass, and twigs, six to twelve inches thick, was laid and packed down. The roof was graded and pitched so that water could be directed into the canales or spouts for drainage. Canales were made of hollowed logs and were placed in the parapet wall of the

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building. However, they were inefficient because they clogged easily, rotted quickly, and, in high winds, directed the water to the sides of the house. The water usually drained on the south, east, or west side in order to avoid freezing water in winter on the northern exposure. (Boyd)

In all earlier houses, floors were made of packed earth. The earth was sometimes mixed with animal blood and ashes to make it hard and resistant to water. (Bunting) Although the first sawmill was set up shortly after the American occupation, wooden floors did not become a common feature in colonial houses until after 1860. Interior walls were frequently clay plastered and whitewashed. The Spanish called the homemade whitewash jaspe.

Cotton muslin, brought over the Santa Fe Trail by the American traders, was often tacked on the ceilings. The cloth or "manta de techo" was covered with a mixture of flour and water. The flour gave the cloth a white color which resembled plaster and the water shrank the cloth tight. The cloth provided another barrier to the earth, hid the uneven vigas, and gave the appearance of plastered walls as in the "proper" homes.

In New Mexico, the use of adobe set a limit on the design of the roof. For the Spanish, "Only flatroofs could be built, unlike structures of brick, stone and even rubble which lent themselves to vaulted ceilings, arched openings, or domes". (Boyd, p.7.)

The Spanish did not set up kilns in which to fire bricks, drains, and roof tiles as they had done in Texas and California. Although they knew of Indian pottery, they found the ceramics were too low-fired and porous; thus making them useless for architectural purposes.

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The Spanish left the technical matters and construction to the Indians who continued to employ their primitive methods. Use of fired-bricks would have provided fire-proof roofs as well as arched and vaulted ceilings.

The metal tools which the Spanish brought with them greatly facilitated the cutting and shaping of timber. Although the Spanish built without elaborate ornamentation, if decoration were used at all, it was on the portal (porch) or principal door.

The typical portal had a cross beam which carried the roof vigas and was supported by round posts. Between the cross beam and the post was a carved bracket or corbeled bracket. The Spanish called this bracket a zapata. Zapatas were sometimes carved in profile although elaborate carving was usually reserved only for churches and important rooms. Decoration was sometimes used in zaguanes or entrance porches. Zaguanes are enclosed on three sides and are usually limited in length to a short area over and adjacent to the main entrance.

Another type of construction employed by the Spanish and Indians was jacal construction. This building method was used when the earth was not suitable for making adobe or when the structures were of secondary importance; such as stables and storage sheds. Small timbers were set in a vertical position in the ground and held together by either horizontal grooved rails at the top and bottom of the wall or, were held together with a weave of branches chinked with mud. The poles were in constant need of plastering so this technique was limited in its use.

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The pattern of settlement of the Spanish-American villages of the Pecos River Valley was originally specified in the San Miguel Del Bado Grant. (Chavez) Conditions three and five of the grant reaffirmed that the petitioners would have to construct the plaza as per the original petition and all other work which would be for the benefit and welfare of the townspeople.

"...[petitioners] promise to enclosed ourselves in a plaza well fortified with bulwarks and towers, and to exert ourselves to supply all the firearms and ammunition that it may be possible for use to procure". (Chavez, Leonard, p. 16)

In spite of the mandates and intentions set down in the grant for the pattern of settlement, the towns adhered very loosely to the design for defensible plazas. Several reasons might explain and account for this situation.

In 1786, the Spanish government, by way of a treaty, formalized a peace and trade agreement with the Comanche Indians. (State Planning Office) The treaty had the effect of allaying and, to a certain degree, dispelling the fears of Indian raids. Consequently, Spanish settlers did not feel the need to fortify their villages to any gre t extent.

The apparent lack of compliance with town-planning specifications might be attributed to the isolation and imposed self-sufficiency of the northern province of New Mexico. Hostile Indian incursions were the major problem for the Spanish government in Mexico. To deal with this problem, the northern region, including New Mexcio, was organized into provincias internas (internal provinces) under the control of a Commandante General. While this had the effect of relieving the central government of this problem, the continued lack of personnel to meet the administrative and military-defensive needs

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of the provinces resulted in minimal enforcement and lax compliance with governmental and military requirements.

The use of genizaros to populate the Spanish-Colonial towns of the Pecos River Valley might also explain the town-planning development. Genizaros were Indians who did not belong to any tribe; having been captured and sold by the Spanish, educated as Christians, and, consequently ostracized from their own tribes. (Earnshaw) The Spanish created the colonial towns to serve as buffer zones against the hostile Indian raids. (Gilbert) Town-planning requirements might have been neglected due to the belief that there would not be any raids against genizaro-populated villages.

There is the final possibility that the towns did develop in accordance with the provisions found in the San Miguel Del Bado Grant; all traces having, long since, been destroyed or deteriorated beyond recognition.

The Spanish-American area of the Pecos River Valley consists, primarily, of small farms and villages. The town patterns of settlement were of similar design. The center of the town was always the plaza; a rectangular-shaped area of ground varying from one to three acres. (Leonard) Dominating this area was the church; almost always built in the center of the plaza or else along the side of the plaza. Houses were frequently built in long adjoining rows along the sides of the town square in order to enclose it and form a defensible plaza.² (A well-preserved example of the Spanish-Colonial defensible plaza design is the Plaza del Cerro in Chimayo, New Mexico) Another possible explanation for the development of houses in long connecting rows is "This phenomenon develops over a period of time by the practice of a son, when he marries, building his house on to the side of that of his parents". (Leonard, P. 28.)

Behind the houses, facing away from the plaza, were the stables, corrals, and storage sheds. Domesticated animals, such

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as horses, pigs, goats, and cows, which were for family use and consumption, were kept close to the living quarters for convenience and protection. Beyond the corrals were the irrigated fields. Under the Spanish and Mexican land grants, there were two classifications of land; irrigated and common lands. Irrigated lands were organized into rectangular plots just beyond the barns. An adequate supply of water was provided by the construction of acequias or irrigation ditches. The acequia dam was built so that there could be constant flow of water from the pool behind the dam into the acequia while the river overflow passed over the dam. The acequia had a lesser gradient than the river, so that it could be carried outwards to the edge of the flood plain, and irrigated water flowed down into the fields towards the river. Small gates, made of wooden boards or earthen mounds, were set into the walls of the acequia at each subordinate channel so that the amount of water could be regulated to each plot. The amount of water each plot received was decided by the "president of the ditch". Elected by the townspeople, the president of the ditch was invested with considerable authoritative powers which permitted him final say on all problems and disputes related to the irrigation of the land.

The idea for acequias probably originated with the Indians and was later adopted by the Spanish. "The Pueblo Indians were practicing irrigation and growing crops when the Spanish explorers and colonists first came to the area". (Lovato) Irrigated fields were sometimes formed on both sides of the acequia in order to increase the amount of irrigated land and the efficiency of the water distribution.

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Further away, beyond the irrigated fields, were the dry farming lands and the common pastures. The common lands were shared by the community and were used for cattle and sheep grazing.

The pattern of settlement and the subsequent land organizations of the villages created a hierarchy of land patterns which fostered cooperation in utilizing common lands and in assigning water to the small, individually-owned irrigated lands.

The period of Mexican independence (1821-1846) had no specific effect on the architecture of New Mexico. Increased isolation and the self-sufficiency of the remote northern province resulted in a continuation of the Spanish-Colonial Tradition.

C. Territorial Style

In 1846, the year New Mexico was annexed to the United States, Americans began to arrive in New Mexico. The architectural forms which they brought with them were slowly adapted to and combined with the Spanish-Colonial architecture. The synthesis of American and Spanish-Colonial elements and forms resulted in an architecture known as the "Territorial Style". Although the "Territorial Period" officially embraces the period 1848, the year New Mexico was made a territory of the United States, to 1912, the year New Mexico became a state of the union, the style did not flourish until after the Civil War. (Bunting) After 1865, the great influx of American merchants, miners, and ranchers had a significant effect upon the architecture of New Mexico. The improvement in the transportation system plus the establishment of manufacturing facilities, such as sawmills and brick plants, made available a wide variety of tools and products.

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The Territorial style is related, in its use of architectural motifs, to the American Greek Revival movement of the 1820s which flourished along the East Coast of the United States; with a delay of about forty years in reaching New Mexico. (Boyd) The style progressed westward and reached the Ohio Valley and Western Reserve in the 1840s. By the 1850s, it had reached Mississippi. The style continued to move up along the Missouri River reaching settlements such as Independence, Missouri and Shawnee Mission, Kansas, just prior to the Civil War. The transference of the Territorial style across the plains and into New Mexico was delayed until after the Civil War. (Boyd) Some claims have been made that the Territorial style reached New Mexico from Mexico.

"The style is termed Territorial even though it seems to have reached this part of the Southwest from Mexico". (Boyd, p. 35-36)

This theory has been disputed by Bainbridge Bunting who states,

"...leading cities in central Mexico never adopted the Neo-Classical movement, which was so popular in Europe and of which the Greek Revival is an off-shoot because of the War of Independence, beginning 1810. Following liberation from Spain, Mexico was too plagued by civil war and economic dislocation to do much serious building. Furthermore, a survey of cities in northern Mexico such as Chihuahua and Durango, through which the style would have had to spread to reach New Mexico, reveals no traces of nineteenth-century Greek Revival forms". (Bunting, p. 10)

The most apparent characteristic of the Territorial style was the pedimented lintel. The lintel, made of wood, featured either a plain fascia or decorative moldings, and was concentrated, mainly, at window and door openings. Another easily recognizable ornament was the portal or porch. Usually extending across the front of a house, the portal had smooth-sawn columns with beaded edges. Wooden moldings were nailed at the top and bottom of the columns in an effort to imitate Classical-Greek columns. The first sawmills had been established soon after the American occupation.

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"A crude mill was in operation near Glorieta Pass by the middle-fifties, and Wilfred Witt built his sawmill near Taos sometime before 1860". (Bunting, p. 11) Prior to the establishment of sawmills, wood was adzed by hand. Under favorable conditions, the wood was cut with a long saw operated by two men; one standing above the log and the other in a pit below. The availability of smooth-sawn lumber resulted in elaborate wooden trim, front verandas, pitched wood roofs, case and shuttered windows, inside wooden floors, splayed window jambs, paneled door and window reveals, and wooden fireplace casings. (Bunting)

The number of windows used in Territorial style architecture was greatly increased; especially after the reduction of the Indian threat. Glass, which replaced the wooden rods of the Spanish-Colonial architecture, was first freighted over the Santa Fe Trail in the 1850s. (Bunting)

Another feature incorporated in Territorial style architecture was a coping of kiln-fired brick which capped the adobe walls. Kiln-burned brick was not produced in New Mexico until the Territorial period. The brick capping was not an inevitable characteristic of the style; especially where pitched roofs were common. Cities, such as Santa Fe and Las Vegas, were the most popular centers for the use of this form of ornamentation.

A new type of plan appeared with Territorial architecture. Instead of the single-axis plan of the Spanish-Colonial architecture, the plan of the Territorial house was two or three rooms deep. The plan also featured a central hall that ran the full depth of the building. The central hall sometimes served as a sala or drawing room.

The Territorial style, once introduced to New Mexico, proved to be very popular. In the large cities such as Santa Fe and Las Vegas, the style predominated through the 1880s. By 1900, the popularity of the style was on the decline due to the new wave of styles which were introduced from the Midwest or California. (Bunting)

D. Later American Period

The later American period in architecture developed as a result of the construction of the railroad. The Santa Fe Railroad reached Las Vegas in 1879 and Albuquerque in 1880. (Bunting) The railroad, which bypassed the towns of the Pecos River Valley, eliminated the stage-coach lines and rapidly reduced the volume of traffic and importance of the Santa Fe Trail. The economic depression in the Pecos River towns which followed resulted in the relative abandonment of the towns and deterioration in the architecture. In the remote villages, the Territorial style continued until the construction of modern highways in the 1930s. Some mountain villages remained quite isolated until after World War Two.

The influence of the Later American period on the Pecos Valley towns was minimal. The most characteristic later feature was the pitched metal roof. The corrugated metal was transported to New Mexico by railroad and erected over the original flat adobe roofs. Other elements, which became a part of the architecture, were double-hung sash windows and factory-made doors, windows, and screens.

The Later American Period and its variations was reflected in the architecture of the communities in inverse proportion to the degree of their isolation.

E. Description

The Spanish-American villages of the upper Pecos River valley are special examples of a community organization of land and water, settlement and cultivation. These were at one time defensive communities; but the major element which now shows in their organization is the husbanding and sharing of water for irrigated fields.

The buildings of the villages are of a similar architecture, of which adobe is the main material. The buildings are as mortal as man himself, requiring constant occupancy and maintenance or they return to the earth. The buildings were efficient shelter for a rural society almost without manufactures. In long rows which could be organized defensively, they enclosed the plaza and church which were the center of the community.

The ground was organized by the acequia, an artificial water course which began at a dam sometimes far upstream. There was a constant flow of water into the acequia from the pool above the dam, while the river overflow passed over the barrier.

The acequia had a lesser gradient than the river, so that as the river dropped away below it, the acequia clung to the side of the canyon walls or was carried diagonally outwards to the edge of the flood plain, which it followed until pinched out by new cliffs and canyons. From the main acequia small gates allowed the division of water into irrigation ditches through which the water ran downwards into the fields towards the river.

In the generally arid lands of New Mexico, the rush of water under bridges and through gates and the sunlight reflections of water in freshly-drowned fields of green plants please the senses of sound and sight beyond measure.

The acequia marked a line of separation between settlement and roads above it and irrigation and cultivation below. On steeper slopes and higher mesas of sage and piñon were the dry acres of grazing land.

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II.

SAN JOSE

Location: U.S. 85, 22 miles SE of Las Vegas, San Miguel
County. Zip Code: 87565 Pop. 180 (1975)

A. History

Originally known as San Jose Del Bado (St. Joseph of the Ford), the town of San Jose was settled by the Spanish in 1794; the year of the San Miguel Del Bado Grant. (Spanish Archives of New Mexico) Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the Pecos River Valley, the area was inhabited by genizaros. (Chavez, Armstrong, Simmons, Gilbert) Genizaros were out-cast Indians who had been captured, ransomed by the Spanish and displaced from their homes. The Spanish brought Tlascalan Indians with them, as their servants and slaves, during the Reconquest of New Mexico in 1693. (Gilbert) Considered by the Spanish to be "children of the enemy," the genizaros were "...left without land, cattle, or other property with which to make a living except their bows and arrows." (Kenner, p. 63-64) When the genizaros became unruly in Santa Fe, Governor Fernando Chacon appointed Don Luis Maria Cabeza de Baca to settle them in the Pecos River Valley. (Gilbert, Glasscock)

In 1803, nine years after the founding of San Jose, Pedro Bautista Pino, acting on orders of the governor, partitioned the land to the settlers of San Jose. (Spanish Archives of New Mexico) In an 1879 plat of the San Miguel

Grant, by John Shaw, San Jose is represented by seven tiny squares for buildings. (State Land Management Office)

After the establishment of the Santa Fe Trail (1821), San Jose became a stop along the trail. On May 19, 1826, permission was granted, by the Bishop of Durango, to erect a church at San Jose. (Chavez, Twitchell) San Jose was under the jurisdiction of Nuestra Senora de los Angeles church in Pecos until nearby San Miguel Del Bado was made a parish and provided with a priest. (Twitchell)

In 1846, San Jose was chosen as a camping site by General Kearny. "During the night of the sixteenth, while we encamped at San Jose, the picket guard placed out by Colonel Doniphan, took the son of the Mexican general, Salezar, prisoner." (Connelley) From the rooftop of one of the buildings, General Kearny proclaimed the American occupation of New Mexico.

Passenger stage-coach service, between Independence and Santa Fe, was established in 1846. (Wheeler Map, Hagerman) The stage-coach route, which crossed the Pecos River ford at San Jose, had regular mail service by 1849, and daily passenger service by 1862. (Hagerman) The Wheeler Map, of about 1874, shows the stage coach line passing through San Jose, but, as in the case of Las Vegas, does not indicate where the stage station was located. The station was probably located in the southeast corner of the plaza. (See essay by H.L. Hagerman) A 1904 survey map of San Jose shows that the number of tiny squares representing buildings had increased to fourteen. It could not be determined whether or

not the squares represented private or public structures.
(State Land Management Office)

In 1858, a United States Post Office was established in San Jose. It has been in operation, intermittently, from its establishment to the present. (Pearce)

As a result of the trade caravans and stage-coach passengers who stopped to rest, procure fresh horse-teams for their wagons, and sell wares, San Jose prospered and grew in population. In 1879, the construction of railroad lines began in New Mexico. The railroad, which bypassed San Jose, eliminated the need for the stage-coach and took over most of the traffic of the Santa Fe Trail. A steady decline in population followed. The village abandonment was further aggravated by the federal government land surveys of the early twentieth-century which assigned the common lands, and were then fenced in; greatly reducing the public grazing lands. Stock breeders were forced to search elsewhere for adequate grazing land for their cattle and sheep or else abandon this form of livelihood.

B. Description

Of the four Spanish-American villages of the upper Pecos River valley San Jose is most populous and has retained to the highest degree the form of its church plaza and the surrounding houses backed by pens and corrals for animals.

A ridge to the west and stone outcroppings on the north and northeast above two arroyos on the west and north suggest a natural defensive line where a wall could have surrounded the town.

A major acequia is in use — brought by flume across the arroyo north of the town to pass below and around San Jose — though the classic division of land by acequia is marred by some houses below the level of the acequia in irrigated land.

The new interstate highway — from which there are excellent views of San Jose — has terminated one end of the road looping into San Jose, so the town is now a cul-de-sac protected from the usually destructive effect of through traffic.

written by: Perry Borchers

III.

San Miguel Del Vado

Location: 2.7 miles south of Interstate Highway 85 on State Road 3,
San Miguel County, 87560. Population 90 (1975)

A. History

San Miguel del Vado (St. Michael of the Ford) was established during the term of governor Fernando Chacon. Lorenzo Marquez led fifty-one settlers, of which thirteen were genizaros onto the San Miguel Del Vado land-grant settlement in 1794. (Chavez)

The San Miguel del Vado Grant furnishes the first documented proof of the Spanish settlement of San Miguel, although it is commonly believed that San Miguel was founded earlier in the 1700's by genizros. (Gilbert, Simmons, Armstrong) Bandalier visited the area in the late nineteenth century and discovered six pueblos in the vicinity. (Earnshaw) "Two small ruins were at San Miguel; one, quarter mile east of town, was situated on the slope of a low embankment close to the Pecos River" (Earnshaw, P.3) Fabiola Cabeza de Baca maintains that the town of San Miguel was settled by Tlascalcan Indians, the decendants of the Mexican Indian servants the Spaniards brought with them during the Reconquest in 1693. The Indians were taken to Santa Fe but when they became unruly San Miguel was chosen for the site of settlement. "Here, Don Luis Maria (Cabeza de Baca) supervised the building of homes, cultivating of the land, construction of dams, and the erection of a church. In later years, after the death of Don Luis Maria, the genizaros emigrated to Antonchico, La Cuesta, Chaperito and other surrounding villages. Hispano colonizers then, seeking farming lands, populated San Miguel del Vado". (Gilbert, p. 76-77)

On March 12, 1803, Pedro Bautista Pino, justice of the peace of

the second precinct of Santa Fe, acting on behalf of governor Chacon, visited San Miguel and divided the land into equal portions, (Chavez) to the fifty-eight families. (The original fifty-two families plus six new families). The people were instructed to "...erect mounds of stone to separate land and were not allowed to sell it for at least ten years". (Chavez). In 1804, the genizaros of the new settlement petitioned the Bishop of Durango for a chapel. Father Bragado of Nuestra Senora de los Angeles de Pecos Mission wrote and spoke of the great need of the settlers for a mission because of the long and perilous distance to the Pecos Mission. The license was granted on February 22, 1805. (Chavez) Jose Cristobal Guerrero, a genizaro of Comanche origin, representing the settlers of San Jose and San Miguel, was in charge of the collection for the building of the church and the license fee. (Chavez). By 1812, San Miguel and San Jose had a population that numbered 230 families. Guerrero, once again, wrote to the Bishop of Durango and requested a resident priest. He suggested that Fray Manuel del Valle of Pecos be sent, and commented that the Comanches were settling in San Miguel and San Jose and getting baptized, so that these towns were expected to become the most populous in New Mexico. (Chavez, Archives of Archdiocese of Santa Fe).

San Miguel remained a mission until May 19, 1826, the year San Miguel, along with the missions of Taos, San Juan, Abiquiu and Belen, were made parishes and provided with secular priests. (Twitchell, p.166). "However, an inventory of the church at Pecos, shows San Miguel to still to be a chapel under the Pecos Mission at that time. (Chavez, 1828, No.12). In 1829, records show that a resident priest was assigned to San Miguel and Padre Fernando Ortiz served briefly". (Earnshaw, p. 5)

After Mexico achieved independence from Spain, the authority and position of the church was weakened throughout the republic. As a result, the church attempted to strengthen ecclesiastical authority by extending civil and religious instruction among the clergy and the people. In 1826, a college was opened in Santa Fe for the education of young men. (Twitchell). During the 1830's, a seminary school was conducted in San Miguel by Father Leyva. (Rodriguez) The ruins of the building where the priests lived can still be seen today. (Irene Duran, interview) There is also the possibility of there having been a school in San Miguel earlier than 1829. Twitchell mentions the existence of a public school in 1811. "About this time (1811), the magnificent sum of eight-hundred dollars had been expended by the government of New Mexico in the conduct of two so-called public schools, one at Santa Fe, and the other at San Miguel." (Twitchell, p. 208) The history of the church and its activities in San Miguel after the American occupation is rather limited. The history that follows has been pieced together from the testimony of Father Philip Cramer, presently the priest at San Miguel and of F. Stanley, who has written an undocumented and not completely reliable history of San Miguel.

In 1884, the Sisters of Charity opened a school in San Miguel. Sr. Ann Marie Devine was the mother superior of the school. Sr. Lucia Gleason, Sr. Angelica Ortiz, and Sr. Mary Carmel Garcia were the teachers. (Stanley). Stanley claims that around 1880, much of the population moved to the nearby town of Ribera because of a small pox epidemic. The sisters kept their school open until 1904. The school was re-opened several years later, as a public school, by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. After the Supreme Court ruling which banned religious

instruction and prayer in public schools, the pastor of San Miguel built a parochial school at San Miguel near the church. (Cramer) The school was there until 1964; and then moved to Villanueva. Sometime in the late 1940's or 50's, the convent burned down and was replaced by some army barracks which were brought in. This is the present residence of the priest. (Cramer)

San Miguel grew rapidly and by 1827, one record shows the population had already reached 2,893 persons. (Boyd) The prosperity and growth of San Miguel can be attributed to the Santa Fe Trail trade. In 1821, William Becknell's caravan set out from Independence, Missouri to Santa Fe; a distance of seven-hundred and thirty miles. He arrived in San Miguel, where his wagons forded the Pecos River, and secured an interpreter before traveling the fifty-eight miles to Santa Fe. (Vestal, p. 288) Becknell wrote of his brief stay in San Miguel as did many other travelers who wrote of their journals along the Santa Fe Trail, during 1821-1880. (Josiah Gregg, Susan Magoffin and George Kendall)

The existence of a customs house at San Miguel is often mentioned. It is not known for certain if there was one and whether or not it was used with any regularity. In a journal written by James J. Webb, in 1844, a mention of the customs house at San Miguel is made. "When we learned the train (caravan) was passed Las Vegas, Colburn, and myself left one afternoon intending to meet it at San Miguel sometime the next day...Messrs. Colburn and Smith took possession of the goods and wagons at San Miguel and entered them and passed through the customs house without any trouble beyond the usual small annoyances from the customs house officers, which were usually satisfied by small loans of money which were never paid or expected to be, and small presents of some kind to which they would take a fancy, generally amount

ing to twenty-five to one-hundred dollars according to circumstances and number of wagons entered". (Bieber, p. 137-138) The existence of customs house at San Miguel is also maintained by Armstrong and Ross. "Here, too, the traders double-teamed and double-loaded their wagons just short of San Miguel to minimize a \$500 per-wagon duty". (Ross, p. 36) Following the American occupation of New Mexico, in 1847, General Sterling Price decreed that a six-percent duty was to be levied on all merchandise entering the Territory. (Earnshaw) A territorial treasurer was named and customs-duty collectorships were established at Taos, San Miguel, and Valencia. (Loyola) Boyd, however, maintains that there was no customs house at San Miguel; at least not during the Mexican period. (1821-1846) She claims that goods were repacked at San Miguel, double-loading the wagons, in order to minimize the tax levied per wagonload, which was collected at Santa Fe. Traders often avoided the tax altogether by turning south at San Miguel to El Paso, and Chihuahua.

There are no documentary records of mercantile stores in San Miguel which have been mentioned in the journals and letters of people who traveled along the Santa Fe Trail. In 1839, Matt Field wrote a newspaper article for the New Orleans Picayune in which he recollected his impressions of San Miguel. In the article, he mentioned that the sole American trader in San Miguel was Thomas Rowland. This was the same Thomas Rowland who "After 30 years in business in San Miguel, Thomas Towland was found murdered one wintery night in 1858". (P. St. George Cooke, p. 16) William Chamberlain, traveling the Santa Fe Trail in 1849, stopped in San Miguel for four days and mentioned that "There are several stores of groceries in the place, their principal business being the sale of inferior liquor". (Bloom, pp. 30-52) Mr. Ramon Griego, a resident of San Miguel states that there used to be stores and that they were

(23)

located on the north side of the church. (Interview).

In 1841, the Texas-Santa Fe Expedition, led by Kendall, was captured by the forces of General Armijo. The Texas expedition had attempted to cut off the Santa Fe Trail at San Miguel as a means of securing control of the trade. Kendall and his men were imprisoned in San Miguel. Shortly thereafter, General McLeod and his officers were captured and also brought to San Miguel. On October 17, 1841, "The Texans were all assembled in the plaza of San Miguel, placed under the charge of Domingio Salazar, and began the long march to Mexico City, there to be imprisoned". (Earnshaw, p.19) Throughout this period, San Miguel was plagued by Indian trouble. The first account of Indian trouble was recorded in the record book of Galisteo for 1804 which mentions the death of two vecinos (neighbors) killed by Apaches while looking for the mine of Rio Tecolote. (Boyd) The problem was so acute that in 1832, the Ayuntamiento of San Miguel (town council) met and discussed "the establishment of a town in a proper place to afford a defense against hostile Indians". (Twitchell, Vol.1, no. 1123) The council was fortunate in that a few years earlier they had found a group of people who were seeking a grant in the area of the Vegas Grandes on Gallinas Creek. The group claimed that their settlement would close the northern "entrance" to the Pecos River Villages. The result of this petition was the Las Vegas grant and the settlement in 1835. (Glasscock) Also, in 1832, Albert Pike, on his way through San Miguel, commented on the prayers, good wishes, and warnings to watch for Indians. (Earnshaw) Indian raids continued into the 1850's and did not cease until after the Civil War. Many accounts are written of Indians stealing and plundering including an account

by Kit Carson, Indian agent for the United States. It was due to the Indian raids that San Miguel was settled and planned around a defensible plaza. (Boyd, Chavez)

In 1846, General Kearny led the American Army through Mexico. He entered Las Vegas, gave a brief speech informing the people that New Mexico was now under the administration of the United States, and administered the oath of allegiance to the town officials. (Earnshaw) "...the next day, (August 16, 1846) with only a short halt of the column, a similar scene was enacted at San Miguel..., the General and his staff, the alcalde (mayor) and a priest and few others ascended a flat house top overlooking the plaza, the General, through his interpreter, delivered his address with the advantage of its success at Tecolote,..." (P. St. George Cooke, p. 17), General Kearny engaged the Twenty-second Regiment of the Mexican Army; forcing Armijo's troops back to Santa Fe.

In 1864, the county seat of San Miguel County was moved from San Miguel del Vado to Las Vegas. (Earnshaw)

San Miguel prospered until the construction of the Santa Fe Railroad in 1879. The railroad, which bypassed San Miguel, put an end to travel on the Santa Fe Trail. By 1900, the population of San Miguel had declined to 450. (U.S. Census 1850-1950) By 1930, there were only 217 people in the community. This same year, 1930, Governor Tingley, running for re-election, addressed the villagers from the portales (porch) at the Inn of the Governors, one of the houses on the plaza. (Earnshaw)

B. Description

Of the four Spanish-American villages of the upper Pecos River valley covered by this HABS survey San Miguel de Vado was the most important historically and is the most deteriorated presently.

It seems almost more an archeological site than an architectural one. Except for the church, the last traces and remnants of ruined walls seem historically more important than standing buildings. But to which stage of San Miguel's history do these traces give evidence? What part belongs to the time of the military buffer against the Comanches, to the customs post of entry into Mexican territory on the Santa Fe trail, to the caravan town and county seat before the coming of the railroad, or to a stubborn last growth in a period of slow decline?

We saw only one farmer of San Miguel driving his tractor through the Pecos River — across the ford which was once the main crossing of the Santa Fe trail — to his fields in the lower land on the eastern side. These fields can undoubtedly be more easily farmed from Ribera, a town which also has drained San Miguel of its people because the Santa Fe railroad was built through it rather than past San Miguel.

A deep erosion of a shoulder of the mesa northwest of San Miguel seems to indicate the path of the Santa Fe trail departing from the town. Meanwhile the original form of San Miguel has been shattered by the state highway built directly through its plaza, from which no new growth has developed.

Like the other towns of this survey, the buildings seem to die from the high ground downwards, and the town retreats to the river bank. San Miguel has retreated more than the others and has less vitality.

Written: Perry Borchers

C.

INTERVIEW

Ms. Irene Duran
San Miguel, New Mexico

September, 1975

Ms. Irene Duran was born in San Miguel and has lived here all her life. The first thing she told me was that there used to be a priest's seminary in San Miguel; the foundations visible on the extreme west side of the town. She was told this by an old lady when she was a little girl. The ruins of a dilapidated house, located on the northwest side of San Miguel was a private home owned by the Quintana family; already abandoned when she was a little girl. The county courthouse and jail were in the same building; the foundation still visible directly behind the church. She was told this by her mother and by Mary Trujillo, a woman who died about ten years ago at the age of seventy-five. The "Territorial House" now owned by David Clawson, was a dance hall when her mother was married there about fifty-years ago.

Around 1951, the town well was dug in San Miguel. Ms. Duran claims that a skeleton was found. The skeleton had braided hair and clothes in the Indian fashion so that it is thought that the skeleton was of an Indian.

Ms. Duran said that Father Cramer, the present resident priest of San Miguel, has all the church records including a large old photograph of San Miguel. The convent, she claims, burned down in the 1950 's.

IV.

VILLANUEVA

Location: Approximately 10 miles south of Interstate Highway 85 on State Road 3, San Miguel County. Zip Code: 87583. Population: 300 (1975)

A. History

Villanueva (New Town) was founded in 1808 by Marianos Baros and Jose Filipe Madrid (Pearce).³ "The official founding of the village is given as 1808" (Phil Cooke, p.34). Originally known as La Cuesta, (the Hill) Villanueva was settled on land which formed part of the San Miguel Del Bado Grant of 1794. The church of Villanueva, dedicated to Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, was built in 1816 (A Ortiz, J. Madrid, interview). However, the license for the construction of the church was granted on May 18, 1831 (Chavez), probably because of difficulties at that time between the Mexican government and the church. F. Stanley suggests that there was once a wall around Villanueva; built as a defense against Indians. Although his claim is entirely without foundation, there exists the possibility that there was once a watchtower or torreón. Mr. Ortiz claims that when he was a boy, he remembered the fifteen-foot high walls of the round-shaped tower which he was told was a torreón (See Ortiz interview).

A school was established in Villanueva just before the turn of the century (Ortiz, interview). The school, built of stone, taught grades one to three, later increasing its classes to include the eighth grade. In 1916, the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother arrived in Villanueva and took over the administration of the school. They taught classes until the Supreme Court ruling banned religious

instruction in public schools. Another school, on the east side of town, was set up and is currently in operation.

The first store in Villanueva was built around 1890 by Mr. Carson; an American from Santa Fe (Ortiz interview). It was in this same year that the United States Post Office was established and the name of the town changed from La Cuesta to Villanueva. The reason for the change in the town's name is not known. In addition to the store owned by Carson, there was a store owned by the Lucero family, one owned by the Gallegos family and one, of short duration, owned by the Madrid family. The Lucero store and the church had a shingle-covered wood roof. Most houses had flat roofs made of earth. The wood roof on the church was replaced by a metal one in the 1920's.

The relative isolation of Villanueva, from the mainstream of technological progress, accounts, in part, for the lack of modern development in its architecture

The railroad, built in 1880, bypassed Villanueva and had the effect of augmenting the decline and isolation of the village. Metal roofs, transported to New Mexico by rail, and built over the existing flat adobe roofs, did not become common place until the 1930's. Electricity was not installed in Villanueva until 1949 (J. Madrid, interview).

B. Description

Villanueva is the only one of the four Spanish-American villages of the upper Pecos River valley which is approached from the eastern side of the river, or rather, in this particular location, from the northern side because of the bend of the Pecos around Villanueva.

The village lies on a north-south ridge approximately 150 feet above the river valley and a somewhat greater distance below the general level of the mesa both behind the town and on the south side of the river valley. It should receive maximum sunlight in winter with some protection from north winds. Because of the narrowness of the ridge where it meets the rising ground to the north, the town could have been relatively easily walled and defended against Indian raids.

The fields to the west, south and east of the town are the most extensive irrigated lands in the upper Pecos River valley; and the dry ridge of the town is seen projecting above an oasis of green fed by the Villanueva southside ditch and the Villanueva northside ditch from a dam one mile upstream to the west. The Villanueva northside ditch barely avoids being pinched out by the ridge coming down to the river; but this aqueduct continues beyond the ridge to the wider valley and irrigated fields to the east.

The distant views of Villanueva and the views from the valley below are the most attractive. The highway along the top of the ridge through the town is presently — and untypically for a Spanish-American village — the dominant space in the town. Paralleling it are the fronts of the main houses, some with placitas to the interior and pens and corrals behind. The church may have had more prominence before its plaza was diminished by the shrine and other additions attached to the church. It could have provided a central place of rest in contrast to the ^{linear} movement ~~and passage~~ expressed by the highway. The vigas are exposed in the ceiling of the church.

C.

INTERVIEW

Mrs. Modesta Garcia &
Mrs. Juanita Madrid
Villanueva, New Mexico

September, 1975

Mrs. Garcia and Mrs. Madrid were interviewed in Mrs. Garcia's home. Both women, neither of which speak English have lived all their lives in Villanueva. Mrs. Garcia was born in Tecolote in 1887 and came to Villanueva just shortly after her birth. Her father, Roque Garcia, was born in Villanueva. Mrs. Madrid was born in Villanueva in 1892. Her grandfather was Jose Felipe Madrid; one of the original founders of La Cuesta or Villanueva as it is now called. Mrs. Madrid never met her grandfather. Mrs. Garcia remembers Marianos Baro, the other original founder of La Cuesta. She said that she was about ten years old when she met him although she never actually discussed anything with him. At the time, Mrs. Garcia said that Mr. Baro was the oldest man in the village. In 1899, Mrs. Garcia recalls that the houses and the church had flat roofs made of earth. A year later, in 1890, a metal roof was put on the church. A few houses at the time, however, did have roofs covered with wooden shingles. Mrs. Madrid recalls that when she was a little girl, only a few houses had metal roofs although she thinks the church had a wood shingled roof before it had a metal one. She thinks this was told to her. Mrs. Madrid also claims that the church was built in 1816, and probably related this information to her daughter, Mrs. Flores. Both women agree that the Sisters

came to Villanueva in 1916. When both women were little girls, school was taught by civilian teachers. School was of three months duration and was only from grades one to three. Mrs. Garcia recalls that one of her teachers was Mr. Antonio Gallegos; a man whom she claims was very strict and feared by all the students. She said the same books were used over and over again but the children were too scared to learn anything. Mrs. Madrid is positive that electricity was first installed in Villanueva in 1949 because she still has the first receipts. Neither woman knew when the town's name was changed from La Cuesta to Villanueva.

From the Spanish Archives, I found a list of the original claimants of El Cerrito. Many of the El Cerrito settlers were supposed to be from San Miguel and other Pecos River Valley towns such as Villanueva. I asked the women if they had ever heard of any of the claimants names.

Fernando Quintana - Mrs. Madrid and Mrs. Garcia said he came from San Miguel.

Manuel Jaramillo - Never hear of him.

Marcelino Montoya - Mrs. Garcia said he came from "El Pino" or "Jorupa"

Juan Madrid y Trujillo - Mrs. Madrid's great-uncle who came from San Miguel.

Emeterio Arellanes - Mrs. Garcia said he was from El Cerrito but went to Las Vegas where his son, Rogelio Arellanes, still resides.

Albino Manzares - Never heard of him.

Elenterio Rael - Mrs. Garcia said he lived in El Cerrito,

the family is now in Colorado.

Ramo Alarid - Never heard of him.

Juan Vigil - Both women said he was from San Miguel.

This interview was conducted in Spanish. Both women appear to be very accurate in their citing of dates and events, and are very alert.

C.

INTERVIEW

Mrs. Isadora Flores
General Delivery
Villanueva, New Mexico 87583

September, 1975

Mrs. Isadora Flores (Born 1902) is sixty-five year old woman who has lived in Villanueva all her life. Her father, Fulgencio Madrid, (1886-1974) and her grandfather, Ambrosio Madrid, (?-1912) were also born in Villanueva. She told me that Jose Felipe Madrid, one of the original founders of the town, was her great-grandfather but that she never met him. Her mother, Juanita Garcia de Madrid (Born 1892) was also born in Villanueva. Mrs. Flores believes that the church of Villanueva was built in 1816. The church is dedicated to Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe. When I pointed out to Mrs. Flores that the Spanish Archives show May 18, 1831, as the date of the license for the construction of the church, she said that the church could have applied much later, after its construction, for the license.

Mrs. Flores told me there were only three stores in town when she was a little girl; one owned by her father, one owned by the Gallegos' and the other one owned by the Lucero family. She remembers that electricity first came to Villanueva sometime after 1945.

The convent, residence of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, was built just prior to the arrival of the nuns in 1916. The Sisters were brought to Villanueva from Wichita,

Kansas, at the request of Father Moog, resident priest of San Miguel. The Sisters had taken over the educational instruction and the administration of the school. The school, which is located next to the Lucero store across the road from the church, was from the first to eighth grades. All instruction was in Spanish. Prior to the arrival of nuns, the school was taught by non-clergy teachers. One of these teachers was Mr. Antonio Gallegos. The Gallegos' still occupy a prominent position in Villanueva.

C.

INTERVIEW

Mr. Andres Ortiz &
Mr. Jose Fidel Baca
Villanueva, New Mexico

September, 1975

I was referred to Messrs. Ortiz and Baca by Mrs. Garcia who said that although they were younger than she, they knew a lot of the history of Villanueva. Mr. Ortiz was the spokesman and told me that he was born in 1897 and Mr. Baca was born in 1894.

Mr. Ortiz was in school in 1907. He said the school was founded just before the turn of the century; circa 1890. The school term was of three months duration and was taught in Spanish. The first store in Villanueva was around 1890 and was owned by an American from Santa Fe; a Mr. Carson. It was Mr. Carson who also established the Post Office. (The Post Office was established in 1890.) At this time, there were two or three other stores in town. One of the stores, the Lucero store, had a shingled roof in the 1920's. The rest of the houses had flat roofs made of earth.

Mr. Ortiz claims the church was built in 1816. He said Father Benito Cuesta, a Spaniard, from the Pecos church or Santa Fe, had documents which proved this. Mr. Ortiz said that the acequia was built during his great-grandfather's time. His grandfather was Jose Antonio Flores.

One of the most interesting things Mr. Ortiz mentioned was the existence of a torreón or watchtower. The torreón was round and had high windows. When he was a boy, he remembers

that the adobe walls were fifteen-twenty feet high. It was located south on Road Three just past the first cross road. The acequia can be seen at the cross road on the west side of the road as well as some ruins which are set on a hill. The torreón is supposed to be just below the ruins in the field. When the farmers saw Indians coming, they would run to the torreón and fight them off. A box, filled with pebbles, was rattled as a means of warning the villagers. Mr. Baca confirmed this and the existence of the torreón.

Mr. Ortiz and Mr. Baca were both very friendly and willing to relate their stories. The interview was in Spanish although I believe they speak English.

V.

El Cerrito

Location: 30 miles southwest of Las Vegas on the Pecos River,
San Miguel County. Zip Code: Serafina, New Mexico 87569.
Pop.: 22.

A. History

El Cerrito, (The Little Hill or Peak) is a small Spanish-American village settled in the early nineteenth-century (Circa 1810). The settlers came from the neighboring villages: the majority from San Miguel (Leonard). Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in El Cerrito, the area had been inhabited by Indians (Quintana, interview). Arrowheads and pottery sherds have been found; and there are Indian pictographs in the vicinity. The village was founded sometime after 1794; the year of the San Miguel Del Vado Grant, and on which land El Cerrito was settled. The earliest documented record of the existence of El Cerrito is 1824 (Twitchell, No. 1090, p. 323). One of the first settlers in El Cerrito was Fernando Quintana (Florencio Quintana, interview). Mr. Quintana, a fourth-generation resident of El Cerrito, claims that his great-grandfather, Fernando Quintana, came to El Cerrito from Spain. The San Miguel Del Vado Grant documents, found in the Spanish Archives, list the original claimants of the land of El Cerrito; among them Senor Fernando Quintana and eight others (State Records Center, Report No. 119, File No. 49). Fernando Quintana and his wife are buried under the floor of the church.

The church of El Cerrito, dedicated to Nuestra Senora de Sanparados, was built in 1888. Mr. Florencio Quintana's grandfather, Epitacio Qunitana, born in El Cerrito in 1844,

rememhered when the church was first heing built and when the adobes for the construction of the church were being made. The date of construction, 1888, is carved in one of the ceiling vigas or beams. The ceiling beams were visible until last year (1974) when a modern ceiling was added. El Cerrito was settled on Tract No. One of the San Miguel Del Vado Grant land tracts. A survey map of the grant, made in 1904, shows the settlement consisting of eight squares representing structure. According to Mr. Quintana, there have never been any stores in El Cerrito; the village always having been a farming community and therefore self-sufficient. There was once a grade school in the village hut it burned sometime in the 1940's. The ruins of the school building still stand in the north east part of the town near the Pecos River bank.

The town plan of El Cerrito is a classic example of the pattern of settlement for Spanish-Colonial towns. (See introduction: Spanish-Colonial Architecture.) Presently, there are only six families residing in El Cerrito.

B. Description

Of the four Spanish-American villages of the upper Pecos River valley El Cerrito is most classic in its pattern of settlement above and irrigation and cultivation below the acequia.

The town is a small ~~part~~^{element in} of a great natural amphitheatre surrounded by cliffs and steep slopes to the mesa. The Pecos River cuts its way into and out of this valley through two canyons and casts itself in three long loops deflected by a central spine of rock — a hill half steeply sloped and half sheared vertically down to the stream — from which comes the name El Cerrito.

The upper loop of the Pecos River encloses the present town and its fields, separated from each other by the acequia which is fed from the pool behind a dam a mile upstream in the canyon. A small church plaza faces a long, continuous spine of buildings down the center of the town. The acequia is said to have existed when the Spanish came.

The second loop, with its ground entry almost closed by the mass of El Cerrito, shows evidence in what is now grazing land of prehistoric Indian settlement and cultivation of an exactly similar pattern. A portion of a dam exists which fed a second acequia into this loop as late as the 1920's.

The prehistoric settlement was more completely protected by river and by hill than the Spanish settlement. ~~the Spanish~~ The Spanish town was better located for communication with the other Spanish settlements west of the Pecos.

Both the prehistoric and the Spanish settlements enjoyed primarily southeast orientation.

C.

INTERVIEW

Mr. Florencio Quintana
El Cerrito, New Mexico

Mail Address: Serafina,
N.M. 87569

September, 1975

Mr. Florencio Quintana is a seventy-three year old man who was born in El Cerrito and has lived here all his life. (Born 1902.) He is the direct descendant of one of the original settlers of El Cerrito, his great-grandfather Fernando Quintana, who, he claims, came from Spain. His grandfather, Epitacio Quintana (1844-1932) and his father, Luis Moria Quintana (1883-1950) were born in El Cerrito and lived all their lives in the village. Mr. Quintana is the village patriarch and this commands a position of authority and respect in El Cerrito. His wife, is of the maiden name Aragon, the other prominent family in town. Both families are closely inter-related.

The birth and death dates were taken from the grave stones found in the church courtyard. Mr. Quintana said that his maternal grandmother, Andreita Aragon, had come from Antonchico, and that her daughter, Isabel Aragon, had married his father Luis Quintana.

Mrs. Quintana told me that the church was dedicated to Nuestra Senora de Sanparados and that the date of the construction of the church, 1888, is carved in one of the ceiling beams. It was visible until last year when a ceiling was hung below the beams.

Mr. Quintana said that there were never any stores in El Cerrito. People were self-sufficient and only went to the city

once or twice a year. He said merchants often came to El Cerrito, in wagons, to sell various wares. The earliest educational instruction was in private homes; a grade school having been established around 1920. The school, which taught through the ninth grade, was accidentally burned-down in the 1940's.

Mr. Quintana has always been a farmer, and recalled that when he was 21, the population of El Cerrito numbered about sixty people. He said that there were only six families left in El Cerrito today, the rest having sold their land and gone elsewhere in search of an easier life.

This interview was conducted in Spanish.

VI.

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OTHER

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- * Recommended
** Highly Recommended

VII.

Footnotes

1. Under normal weather conditions, a fair quality of adobe will wear at the rate of one inch in twenty years (Kubler, p.25)
2. Spanish-Colonial towns were originally intended to be designed around the defensible plaza design. (San Miguel Del Bado Grant, Spanish Archives, State Records Center)
3. The earliest documented proof of the existence of Villanueva is the mention of "La Cuesta" in 1818. (Spanish Archives)

VIII.

GLOSSARY

Adobe	- a sun-dried brick of clay and straw
Aduana	- customs house
Alacena	- wall cupboard
Alcalde	- mayor, town official
Almacen	- warehouse, large storage shed or structure
Ayuntamiento	- town council, municipal government
Banco	- built-in seating
Canale	- scupper or spout
Cerrito	- small hill or peak
Cerro	- hill or peak
El	- the
Genizaro	- begotten by parents of different nations
Grande	- big, large
Gallina	- hen
Horno	- outdoor oven
Jacal	- upright posts, as in jacal construction
Jaspe	- homemade whitewash
Latias	- ceiling of; peeled poles in herringbone pattern
Llano Estacado	1. Palisaded plain 2. place for duel (fighting)
Menta	- cloth blanket, cotton cloth
Nueva	- new
Padre	- father, priest
Paracleto	- Holy Ghost

Placita	-	open court
Portal	-	porch
Presidio	-	outpost garrisoned by soldiers; jail or prison
Pretilles	-	firewalls
Provincia interna	-	internal province
Puerto	-	place, barracks for soldiers
Rajas	-	lattice work, of split cedar boards
San Miguel	-	St. Michael
San Jose	-	St. Joseph
Savinos	-	saplings, branches, etc., laid on top of vigas for ceiling, log, beam, or rafter
Soterrano	-	small storage cellar
Tapia	-	mud wall, massive wall
Techo	-	roof
Tierra amarilla	-	yellow earth
Tierra blanca	-	white earth
Tierra colorado	-	red earth
Tierra negra	-	black earth
Tierra verde	-	green earth
Vado	-	ford, river crossing
Vega	-	open plain
Viga	-	beam, floor or ceiling
Villa	-	town, country house
Zaguan	-	covered passage

IX.

Appendix

NOTES ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL STAGE ROUTE AND A POSSIBLE STAGE STOP AT SAN JOSE

The original route of the Santa Fe trail, from Las Vegas to Santa Fe, crossed the Pecos River at the town of San Miguel (San Miguel del Vado).

In 1858, Capt. John N. Macomb, an Army engineer, relocated (in places) and repaired (in places) the road, from Fort Union (just beyond Las Vegas) to Santa Fe -- and his road crossed the Pecos River at the town of San Jose, a few miles upstream from San Miguel.

SOURCES: W. Turrentine Jackson, Wagon Roads West, U. of Calif. Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952 and Yale U. Press, New Haven, 1965.

A map prepared by the Engineer Bureau, War Dept. " Map of the States of Kansas and Texas and Indian Territory with parts of the Territories of Colorado and New Mexico ", 1867 (a copy from the U. S. Archives, Washington, D. C. in my possession) -- and other maps.

Passenger stage operation, between Independence and Santa Fe, began in 1846 or 1847. Regular mail coaches were running by 1849. Daily service was established by 1862.

SOURCE: " Notes on the Santa Fe Trail " from Kenyon Riddle, Records and Maps of the Old Santa Fe Trail.

Had I been running a stage coach business, I would surely have picked the newest, shortest, and most improved road available -- in this case, Capt. Macomb's road -- as soon as it was available -- in this case, any time after 1858.

Other research on the location of the road seems to bear this out. From Margaret Long, The Santa Fe Trail: Following the Old Historic ~~TRAIL~~ Pioneer Trails on the Modern Highways, Denver, Colorado, W. H. Kistler Stationery Co., 1954, I quote:

" The emigrant road went west through San Miguel on the Pecos to San Jose. The Wheeler maps show a direct road from Bernal to San Jose, with connecting roads to San Miguel. " (page 249)

And: " Based on the distance between Bernal and Rowe there should have been a station at San Jose. The Wheeler map (sheet 78 A) shows the town of San Jose, but, as in the case of Las Vegas, does not give the stage station. " (Appendix B, Santa Fe Stage Stations in New Mexico, page 275.)

The railroad (which, of course, put the stagecoach companies out of business) reached La Junta, Colo. in 1876; Las Vegas, N.M. in 1879; and Santa Fe, N.M. in 1880. SOURCE: Kenyon Riddle and others.

I would conclude, from the above information, that any stage stop at San Jose was built between 1858 (date of Macomb's improved road) and 1878 (date of near-completion of the railroad) -- a more exact date could be guessed at and, perhaps, substantiated by further research.

In the Museum of New Mexico's Photo Archives, in the file folder marked " San Jose, N.M. ", there are three pictures of an old building with a long wooden portal.

continued...

NOTES on the S. F. Trail stage route and possible stop at San Jose, page 2

My husband and I have visited this building several times in the past five years (1966 - 1971) and have talked with a Mr. Ruben Ullibarri (a man about 40 years old , who lives in the part of the building nearest the town plaza (toward the back of the building in the photograph) and whose mother (if I remember correctly) owns the property.

Mr. Ullibarri told us that this building (now almost completely in ruins) was " the old stage stop on the Santa Fe trail " .

I thought it was certainly an interesting story -- I also thought I would be more inclined to believe it if I could discover some proof that a stage route had passed through San Jose and that there had been a stopping point there.

I am now certainly convinced that the stage route did pass through San Jose; and, if Mr. Ullibarri is correct, the building pictured in the Photo Archives file is the old Santa Fe trail stage stop, with the stone and adobe barns and corrals across the road having been used to hold the horses.

As for the date of the picture, since it shows the building as no longer in use and deteriorating, it would probably have been taken after 1880 (when stage travel gave way to railroad travel) and before 1910 (based on the type of negative used) -- due to the condition of the building, let's guess 1900.

(To me, this photograph itself is an indication that the building was probably the old stage stop -- someone passing through San Jose in 1900 thought it was important enough to photograph, taking pictures of it and not of the other buildings in the town.)

If it would be of any use to anyone, I would be glad at this point (1971) to photograph the same building from the same angle to show the extent of present deterioration and/or to photograph some of the ruined shutters and doors (attractively decorated with wooden cutouts of hearts and diamonds) now in the possession of myself and my husband.

Katherine (Mrs. H. L.) Hagerman
Santa Fe, New Mexico
April 21, 1971

FEB.

Correction of last paragraph: 4 color prints of slides taken in ~~Feb~~ 1968 of this building at San Jose are enclosed. I would be glad to go back and take a panoramic view...



San Jose ca 1910-20

10000 - San Jose
the castle
place
1912

10WNS - 10W0000
glass neg 547
film

ca 1900-20



1912

Twitchey Coll.

Towns-Sa Jose
glues No. 5-X7

Ca 1910-20

